



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

January 14, 2020

The Honorable Brian Schatz
United States Senate
722 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Schatz:

Thank you for your focus on the Commission's work to modernize and make more productive use of the 2.5 GHz spectrum band. This band is the largest contiguous block of spectrum below 3 GHz in the United States. It is unassigned in much of the country, particularly in the Western United States. And it is well suited to rural deployments. Given the potential of this key mid-band spectrum, we must make sure that the 2.5 GHz band is used to bring advanced wireless services to those who for too long have been on the wrong side of that divide.

As I've seen for myself—from the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in South Dakota to the Navajo Nation in Arizona, from the Coeur D'Alene Reservation in Idaho to the Jemez and Zia Pueblos in New Mexico—the digital divide is most keenly felt in Indian Country. I want to make sure that those committed to connecting Tribal members in rural areas are given a strong opportunity to succeed. That's why I insisted on, and the Commission included, a Tribal priority filing window in our order opening the 2.5 GHz band for additional use; that early opportunity to access this spectrum will help some of the most marginalized communities in the country.

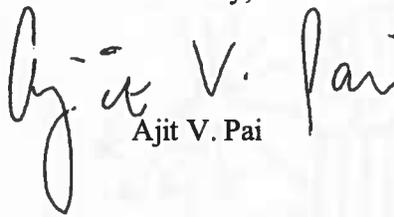
I know the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) has been working with Commission staff to prepare Tribal communities for the upcoming eligibility window. And following discussions I personally have had with representatives of Tribal and Native Hawaiian organizations, I share your view that Tribes will need sufficient time to prepare and participate in the Tribal priority window. Therefore, on December 2, I sent letters to Tribal and Native Hawaiian leaders, and the FCC also issued a Public Notice, stating that the Tribal priority window will open on February 3, 2020 and close on August 3, 2020. This extended 182-day window is the result of the hard work of agency staff and takes into account NCAI's recent resolution on this issue.

Commission staff, both from our Wireless Telecommunications Bureau our Office of Native Affairs and Policy, have worked extensively on outreach to Tribal and Native Hawaiian stakeholders to help them prepare for the Tribal priority window, reaching out to every federal recognized Tribe, and conducting a number of workshops and events across the nation, including a workshop at the FCC on January 14, 2020, which was both webcast live and taped to be made available on our website. Commission staff also have developed a number of tutorials and tools to assist Tribes, including a mapping tool that helps identify where 2.5 GHz spectrum is unassigned and available over rural Tribal lands. Finally, our Wireless Telecommunications Bureau released, on January 6, 2020, a public notice containing the procedures for Tribes to apply for 2.5 GHz spectrum during the priority window. This public notice is available at <https://www.fcc.gov/document/25-ghz-tribal-window-procedures-pn> and is attached to this letter.

The Commission is making available a number of web-based tools to assist applicants in preparing for and participating in the priority window.

The FCC takes seriously its trust relationship with federally-recognized Tribal Nations, and we share the common goal of closing the digital divide in Indian Country. To this end, it is important that we collaborate to ensure that interested Tribes can take advantage of this unprecedented option. Working together, we can and will bring greater digital opportunity to everyone in Indian Country.

Sincerely,

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Ajit V. Pai



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The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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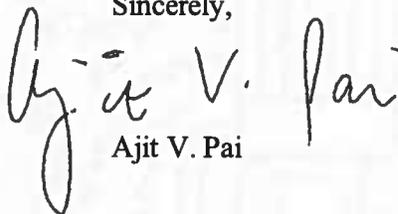
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The Honorable Tom Udall
United States Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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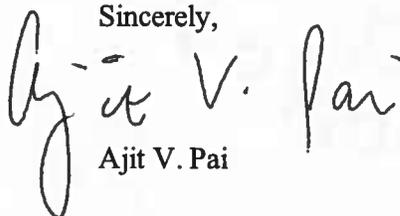
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